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ARGENTINA: President Peron has taken the first step in what may become a major offensive against Argentine terrorists.

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Montoneros Are Formally Outlawed in Argentina

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Responding to an unprecedented upsurge in left-wing violence and kidnapings, President Maria Estela Peron has formally outlawed the Montonero guerrilla organization as the first step in what may become a major offensive against all Argentine terrorists.

The Montoneros supported the return of Juan Peron from exile in 1973, but declared "war" against his widow in September 1974. The government had avoided taking official action against them for fear of antagonizing those Peronists who have been alienated by the conservative policies of the present administration. The Montoneros have played an effective political role through agitation within the Peronist labor movement and even fielded candidates under the banner of the Authentic Party in a recent provincial election.

The government has now given security forces considerable latitude in conducting counterinsurgency operations. Until now, sympathetic newspapers and radio stations could force the release of Montoneros held without charge by publicizing their names. Such actions in behalf of outlawed groups are now forbidden.

Additional measures are likely to be announced soon. The new army commander, General Jorge Videla, has told newsmen that the army's anti-guerrilla operations in Tucuman Province, largely against the People's Revolutionary Army, could be extended throughout the country "if the circumstances warranted." He added that a federal organization may be formed to coordinate the actions of all security forces.

The Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army would like to goad the armed forces leaders into ousting the government, which they regard as insufficiently radical. They expect that such a move would produce popular revulsion against the military and assure an eventual left-wing victory. In pursuit of this long-range goal, the guerrillas have been focusing their terrorist attacks on all branches of the armed forces.

Argentine society is being battered by the twin assaults of economic deterioration and mounting violence, which feed on each other and could over time bring about the political polarization the extremists seek. 3.5(c)

Colombia Assassination

The assassination on Monday of Colombia's inspector general of the armed forces, General Rincon, was apparently the work of a pro-Havana guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army.

Rincon previously had headed the army brigade most involved in operating against the guerrillas. (U)

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